

**Studying interorganizational trust in public administration:
A conceptual and analytical framework for ‘administrational trust’**

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THIS IS A PRE-PRINT VERSION OF:

Oomsels, P. & Bouckaert, G. (2014). Studying interorganizational trust in public administration: a conceptual and analytical framework for “administrational trust. *Public Performance & Management Review*. 37(4). 577-604.

Abstract: This article argues that interorganizational trust is a crucial but understudied topic in public administration research. It consolidates the relevant literature and identifies the conceptual building blocks that are required to study interorganizational trust and distrust as specific phenomena in public administration. The authors argue that both trust and distrust can be considered to have certain functionalities and dysfunctionalities for interorganizational interactions in public administration, and discuss the dimensions and sources of interorganizational trust and distrust in such interactions. The article consolidates these discussions in the concept of 'administrational trust', which is defined as *"a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners regarding their intentional and behavioral suspension of vulnerability on the basis of expectations of a trustee organization in particular interorganizational interactions in public administration"*. The authors construct and present a framework for analysis of the mechanisms of administrative trust and distrust, and argue that it also allows the development of management strategies to optimize interorganizational trust-distrust distributions in order to facilitate, solidify and increase the performance of interorganizational cooperation in public administration.

Keywords: Interorganizational cooperation; public administration; interorganizational trust and distrust; administrative trust and distrust.

1. Introduction

In 1979, Niklas Luhmann (1979, p. 8) wrote that there was a “*regrettably sparse literature which has trust as its main theme*”. However, by the end of the 1990’s, his lament lost a significant amount of its validity (Kramer, 1999). The social, political and economic realities of an increasingly interdependent and global world (Cook, 2001) led to a surge of scholarly attention for trust, which became increasingly recognized as an important factor for inter- and intra- organizational relationships in the private sector over the past two decades (Bijlsma-Frankema & Costa, 2005).

Political scientists and public administration scholars appear to be mainly interested in the topics of social trust in societies and societal trust in government. These topics have been studied extensively in well-known contributions to these fields (for example Putnam, 2000; Fukuyama, 1995; Uslaner, 2002). Bouckaert (2012) identifies T1 (societal trust in public administration), T2 (public administration trust in society) and T3 (trust within public administration) as three relevant trust research orientations for public administration, and argues that the two latter orientations receive much less attention than the former. For instance, Yang (2005) studies public administrator’s trust in citizens, but his work is a rare exception in that respect. Nyhan (2000) discusses the internal organizational perspective of trust within public administration, but a real focus on interorganizational trust within public administration remains a topic of scarce interest for public administration scholars to date (Choudhury, 2008; Klijn, Edelenbos & Steijn, 2010). This scarce attention is peculiar considering the (political) discourse surrounding public management and organizational research in the private sector. According to Choudhury (2008), citizens and reformers alike have seemingly started to consider trust to be both a necessary goal as well as a means for effective administration. In this article we address this gap in the existing literature through a comprehensive discussion of interorganizational trust in public administration, and provide an analytical framework that can be used to study and manage such trust effectively.

1.1. Why focus on interorganizational trust in public administration research?

Despite the scarce research attention for the topic, interorganizational trust is often argued to be an important concept for contemporary public administration. In his

treatise on the future of public administration, Dwight Waldo (1980, p. 187) argued that public administration is subject to increasing complexity because it is given responsibilities “*beyond the virtue and authority [it] can summon*”. As the complexity of public governance grows, single organizations quickly reach the boundaries of their rationality and bureaucratic inflation renders organizations increasingly cumbersome (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007), which inhibits their capacity to cope with the policy challenges of modern society. Scholars have argued that ‘governance’ ideas emerged in the discourse of public sector reform in order to cope with this rising complexity (Pierre & Ingraham, 2010; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Organizational specialization, chains of design and planning and cooperation in networks are central strategies to deal with individual bounded rationality and achieve composite decisions and policy objectives in these complex contexts (Simon, 1997; Lane & Bachmann, 1998; Miles & Snow, 1986; Pierre & Ingraham, 2010). Full reliance on hierarchical steering on the one hand and the free market on the other hand are considered to be outmoded as effective management strategies (Loorbach, 2010, p. 162), and loosely coupled networks of public governance actors are proposed as a potential alternative. Authors such as Shaw (2003), Getha-Taylor (2012) and Agranoff (2013) argue that (interorganizational) trust is a very important factor for successful (co-)operation in such networked contexts. Edelenbos and Klijn (2007) argue that trust facilitates, solidifies and increases the performance of interorganizational cooperation in complex decision-making networks.

However, scholars treat the concept of ‘trust’ critically in public administration. Bouckaert (2012) warns that trust should not be considered as a panacea for reform, since an overabundance of trust is as damaging as too little trust for public administration. Van Montfort (2010) similarly argues that trust is often used as a mantra in reform rhetoric, potentially veiling and obstructing serious debate about mechanisms such as oversight, accountability and the organization of checks and balances in public administration. Furthermore, it remains unclear how insights from private sector research might be transferred to the public sector, as the political nature of public administration’s ‘sponsor’ might set it apart from the private sector in significant ways (Niskanen, 1971). It is therefore essential to understand interorganizational trust better in the context of public administration as currently, it

remains unclear to which extent conclusions of private sector interorganizational trust research also hold for public administration, and whether there is room for a ‘trust paradigm’ in the public sector.

In what follows, we will build and present a conceptual and analytical framework to guide empirical analysis of interorganizational trust and distrust in the context of public administration. We first discuss the conceptual nature of trust. Second, we consider the role of interorganizational trust and explore it in the context of public administration. Third, we discuss the distribution of interorganizational trust and distrust in complex interactions. Fourth, we focus on the ‘organizational’ nature of interorganizational trust and distrust. Fifth, we discuss the sources of interorganizational trust and distrust and finally, we consolidate our discussion in the overarching concept of ‘administrational trust’ and present and discuss the resulting analytical framework.

2. Towards a conceptual framework for interorganizational trust in public administration

2.1. What is trust?

An extensive and expanding body of literature has generated numerous definitions of trust over the years. However, the multidisciplinary research community did not succeed in formulating a comprehensive theory of interorganizational trust as of yet (McEvily & Tortoriello, 2011). Lewicki and Brinsfield (2011) noted that each discipline still tends to focus on aspects of trust that are consistent with its own dominant theoretical paradigms. Although trust is now one of the most frequently used social science concepts (Das & Teng, 2004), the detached accumulation of trust research has led to “*a conceptual morass*” (Carnevale & Wechsler, 1992, p. 473) that remains daunting after two decades of trust research (Nooteboom, 2006). Table 1 gives an overview of the wide range of such trust definitions.

Table 1: An overview of trust definitions

Authors	Discipline	Definitions
Bachmann & Inkpen (2011)	Sociology	The decision of one party to rely on another party under conditions of risk. The trustor permits his or her fate to be determined by the trustee and risks that he or she will experience negative outcome, i.e. injury or loss, if the trustee proves untrustworthy.
Braithwaite & Levi (1998)	Social psychology	A relationship between actors or groups in which one party adopts the position, expressed either verbally or behaviorally, that the other will pursue a course of action that is considered preferable to alternative

		courses of action.
Bromily & Harris (2006)	Organization studies	One's non-calculative belief in another's honesty in negotiations, good-faith efforts to keep commitments, and forbearance from opportunism.
Carnevale & Wechsler (1992)	Public administration	A faith in people, their motivations, and their capacities.
Coleman (1990)	Sociology	Situations in which the risk one takes depends on the performance of another actor.
(Choudhury (2008)	Public administration	A voluntary act that is based on a psychological state of positive expectation in the face of vulnerability and risk.
(Currall & Judge (1995)	Social psychology	An individual's behavioral reliance on another person under a condition of risk.
Das & Teng (2001)	Organization studies	Positive expectations regarding the other in a risky situation.
Dasgupta (1988)	Economics	Expectations about the actions of other people that have a bearing on one's own choice of action when that action must be chosen before one can monitor the actions of those others.
Deakin & Michie (1997)	Management	One is willing to assume an open and vulnerable position. One expects the other actor to refrain from opportunistic behavior even if the opportunity for it arises without having any guarantee that the other party will indeed act as expected.
Gambetta (1988)	Sociology	A particular level of the subjective probability with which an agent assesses another agent or group of agents will perform a particular action. When we say we trust someone or that someone is trustworthy, we implicitly mean that the probability that he will perform an action that is beneficial or at least not detrimental to us is high enough for us to consider engaging in some form of cooperation with him.
Gamson (1968)	Political science	The probability that the political system will produce preferred outcomes even if it is left untended.
Giddens (1990)	Sociology	The confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles.
Grey & Garsten, (2001)	Management	A precarious social accomplishment enacted through the interplay of social or discursive structures, including those of work organizations, and individuated subjects.
(Hardin, 2002)	Political science	A form of encapsulated interest. A trusts B because he or she presumes it is in B's interest to act in a way consistent with A's interest.
Hosmer (1995)	Sociology	An expectation by one [entity] of ethically justifiable behavior—that is, morally correct decisions and actions based upon ethical principles of analysis—on the part of the other [entity] in a joint endeavor or economic exchange.
Khodyakov (2007)	Sociology	Trustworthy relationships make people vulnerable to the behavior of their colleagues, who are expected, but not obliged, to act in the best interest of the organization.
Klijn, Edelenbos, & Steijn (2010)	Public administration	A stable positive expectation that actor A has (or predicts he has) of the intentions and motives of actor B in refraining from opportunistic behavior, even if the opportunity arises (Edelenbos and Klijn, 2007). Trust is based on the expectation that actor A will take the interests of actor B into account.
Lewis & Weigert (1985)	Sociology	The belief held by members of a social system that allows them to act according to and feel secure in the expected futures constituted by the presence of each other or their symbolic representations.
Lewicki, McAllister & Bies (1998)	Social psychology	Trust is defined in terms of confident positive expectations regarding another's conduct, and distrust is defined in terms of confident negative expectations regarding another's conduct.
Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman (1995)	Social psychology	The willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party.
McAllister (1995)	Social psychology	The extent to which a person is confident in, and willing to act on the basis of, the words, actions, and decisions of another.
Misztal (1996)	Sociology	To believe that results of someone's intended action will be appropriate from our point of view.

Möllering (2001)	Sociology	A state of favorable expectation regarding other people's actions and intentions, as such it is seen as the basis for individual risk-taking behavior, co-operation, reduced social complexity, order, social capital and so on.
Möllering (2006)	Sociology	A reflexive process building on reason, routine and reflexivity, suspending irreducible social vulnerability and uncertainty as if they were favorably resolved, and maintaining a state of favorable expectation towards the actions and intentions of more or less specific others.
Nooteboom (2006)	Economics	The expectation that a partner will not engage in opportunistic behavior, even in the face of opportunities and incentives for opportunism.
Ostrom (1998)	Economics	The expectation of one person about the actions of others that affects the first person's choice, when actions must be taken before the actions of others are known (adapted from Dasgupta).
Parsons (1970)	Sociology	The attitudinal ground- in affectively motivated loyalty- for acceptance of solidary relationships.
Ring & Van de Ven (1994)	Management	Faith in the moral integrity or goodwill of other, which is produced through interpersonal interactions that lead to social-psychological bonds of mutual norms, sentiments, and friendships.
Rotter (1967)	Psychology	An expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, or verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied on.
Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer (1998)	Social psychology	A psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another.
Sztompka (1998)	Sociology	A bet on the future contingent actions of others.
Williamson (1993)	Economics	Trust is warranted when the expected gain from placing oneself at risk to another is positive, but not otherwise.
Zand (1972)	Sociology	Increasing vulnerability to another whose behavior is not under one's control in a situation in which the penalty one suffers if the other abuses that vulnerability is greater than the benefit one gains if the other does not abuse that vulnerability.
Zaheer, McEvily, & Perrone (1998)	Organization studies	The expectation that an actor (1) can be relied on to fulfill obligations (2) will behave in a predictable manner and (3) will act and negotiate fairly when the possibility for opportunism is present.
Zucker (1986)	Sociology	A set of expectations shared by all those involved in an exchange.

This overview illustrates the span of trust definitions quite clearly. It allows us to crystallize that trust stems from both cognition and affection (McAllister, 1995), is required in risky or contingent situations (Luhmann, 1979; Das & Teng, 2001), is characterized by a willingness to be vulnerable (Currall & Judge, 1995), leads to risk-taking behavior (Lewis & Weigert, 1985) and is based on positive expectations of a counterpart (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). As such, we will define trust as “the intentional and behavioral suspension of vulnerability by a trustor on the basis of positive expectations of a trustee”.

In the following paragraphs, this table is used as the anchor for a discussion of the dimensions, the role, the distribution, the organizational nature and the sources of interorganizational trust in public administration.

2.2. Dimensions of trust

First, some of the definitions refer to trust as an expectation, others conceptualize trust as an attitude and still others formulate trust as behavior. Therefore, some authors have argued that the phenomenon of trust has multiple dimensions (McEvily & Tortoriello, 2011; Lewis & Weigert, 1985). The first dimension of trust is often discussed as the trustor's perception of the trustworthiness of the trustee, which is argued to consist of positive expectations of the trustee's ability, benevolence and integrity in a specific relation (Colquitt, Scott & Lepine, 2007; Dietz, 2011; Li, 2011). Ability refers to the perceived skills, competences and other characteristics that allow the trustee to have influence in some domain. Benevolence is the belief that the trustee wants to do good for reasons that are not completely egocentric, and integrity refers to the belief that the trustee adheres to a set of values and principles that are acceptable to the trustor (Mayer et al., 1995). The dimension of perceived trustworthiness therefore refers to the trustors' expectations about the trustee regarding these characteristics.

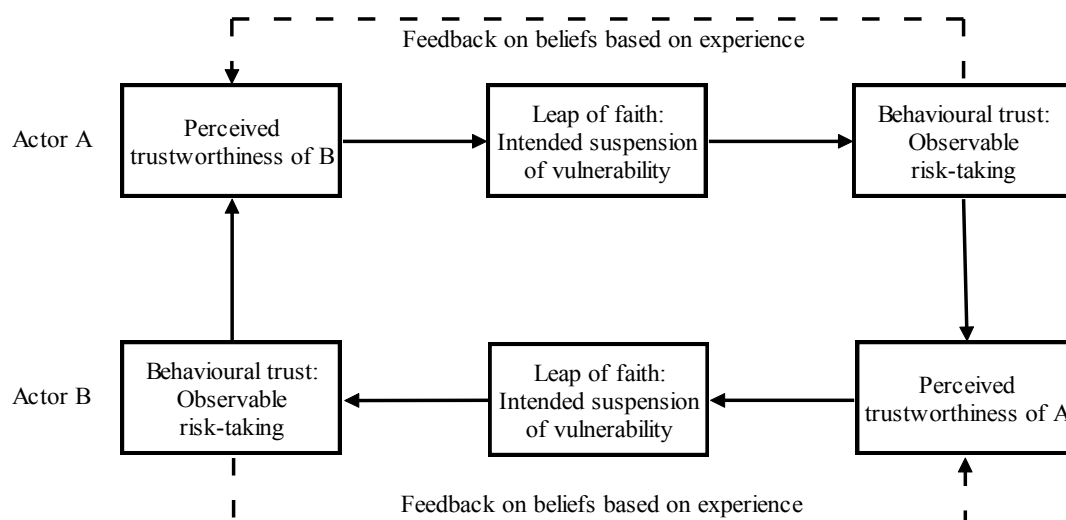
On the basis of their perceptions about the trustworthiness of a trustee, trustors can suspend the existing unpredictability, ambiguity and complexity in interactions, encouraging their willingness to accept vulnerability in a certain relation (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007; Zucker, 1986). This is the second dimension of trust. The trustor makes a 'leap of faith' on the basis of incomplete information through which risk and vulnerability are suspended (Möllering, 2006). This vulnerability is derived from *"uncertainty regarding the motives, intentions, and prospective actions of others on whom [actors] depend"* (Kramer, 1999, p. 571). The notion of suspension means that a trusting actor is never sure whether he is making the right choice or not. A trusting actor knows that uncertainty, vulnerability and risk are present, but suspends this knowledge on the basis of good reasons *"as if it were favorably resolved"* (Möllering, 2006, p. 115). A trustor suspends vulnerability, not because they don't know it is present, but because they have good reasons to believe that the trustee will not abuse the suspended vulnerability.

There is a third dimension of trust that needs to be taken into account as it has been argued that *"trust is only involved when the trusting expectation makes a difference to a decision; otherwise what we have is a simple hope"* (Luhmann, 1979, p. 24).

Lewis and Weigert (1985, p. 971) note that *“the practical significance of trust lies in the social action it underwrites”*. Behavioral trust can therefore be seen as observable risk-taking behavior in a relational exchange process. As Currall and Judge (1995) explain, such behavior can result from a trustor’s willingness to accept vulnerability, but this is not necessarily the case. Risk-taking behavior can also be present in the absence of willingness to take risks (such as when risk-taking behavior is enforced by regulations), or it can be absent in the presence of willingness to take risk (such as when risk-taking behavior is forbidden or obstructed by regulations).

Trust is argued to be a reciprocal and self-reinforcing phenomenon because these three dimensions are argued to be interrelated. First, trust is considered to be self-reinforcing because actors who perceive their counterpart to be trustworthy will be more willing to suspend their vulnerability and take observable risks in relationships, which generates relational information on the basis of which they update their perceptions of the ability, benevolence and integrity of the trustee (Mayer et al., 1995). This argument explains the emergence of virtuous cycles of trust and vicious cycles of distrust (Vlaar, Van den Bosch & Volberda, 2007; Zand, 1972). Second, trust is argued to be reciprocal because the risk-taking behavior of actor A can be interpreted by actor B as a relational signal of A’s trustworthiness (Ostrom & Walker, 2003). These self-reinforcing and reciprocal dynamics between the dimensions of trust are illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 1: The reciprocal and self-reinforcing nature of (dis)trust in interactions



Discussions of trust are often confounding and fail to distinguish the different dimensions of the concept (Hardin, 2001). A comprehensive framework of trust should therefore allow analysis of perceived trustworthiness, suspension of vulnerability and behavioral trust (Das & Teng, 2004; McEvily & Tortoriello, 2011; Mayer et al., 1995).

2.3. Role of trust and distrust in public administration

A meta-analysis of trust research conducted by Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) shows that empirical research focuses mainly on the positive role of trust and the negative role of distrust in relations. In our introduction, we argued that trust is increasingly important in public administration because increasingly complex public problems transgress the boundaries of single organizations' rationality, therefore requiring cooperation and 'governance'. In this paragraph, we argue more elaborately why interorganizational trust is considered to be functional in public administration. However, we also argue that the same argument can be made for interorganizational distrust. Van de Walle (2011) for instance, has argued that New Public Management might be considered to have attempted to strengthen citizen trust in public administration (T1) by introducing institutionalized interorganizational distrust (T3) in the public sector through contracts, fragmentation, short-term explicit standards of performance and audit and control mechanisms (Dubnick, 2005). In recent reform initiatives, strict administrative procedures and controls are considered as instruments to increase the accountability and transparency of administrations towards citizens (Berg 2005). Both interorganizational trust and distrust can be associated with functionalities and dysfunctionalities for public administration. Four perspectives might be conceptualized in this regard, as shown in the following table.

Luhmann (1979) argues that anyone who refuses to confer trust will be burdened with the complexity of entirely contingent situations, which places so many demands on the individual that it renders him incapable of action. Trust is therefore functional to enable action and cooperation in contingent environments because it enables 'suspension' of risk (Möllering, 2006). This suspension of risk is an important functional factor for successful collaboration because it allows actors to focus on achieving project goals instead of on developing the details of the partnership (Shaw,

2003). As such, interorganizational trust allows to overcome some “*considerable barriers of collective inertia*” (Agranoff, 2013, p. 194).

Table 2: Role of interorganizational trust and distrust in public administration (conceptualization)

	Trust	Distrust
'Functional'	Suspension of risk leads to increased cooperation, flexibility, innovation, learning, goal-orientation, performance and pro-social behavior, which is argued to result in unpredictable but potential gains and cost-efficiency	Active avoidance of risk inspires atomization, regulation and behavioral control, which protect actors against possible abuse of their vulnerability, which is argued to result in predictable (but high) transaction costs and predictable (but low) gains
'Dysfunctional'	Suspension of risk leads to possible abuse of vulnerability in case of opportunism and blindness to failure, which is argued to result in unpredictable potential costs	Active avoidance of risk inspires atomization, regulation and behavioral control, which is argued to lead to foregone opportunities and associated high opportunity costs

However, distrust also enables action in contingent environments on the basis of assumed likely contingencies, and is therefore considered to be the major “functional equivalent” of trust (Luhmann, 1979; Lewis & Weigert, 1987). The functional equivalence between trust and distrust is explained by Hardin (2002, p. 95) in his argument that “*if I either trust or distrust you, I have fairly clear grounds on which to act towards you*”. While trust is associated to collaborative action due to intentional and behavioral suspension of vulnerability, distrust is associated to atomized action due to the intentional and behavioral avoidance of vulnerability, in which actors either withdraw from interactions or rely on an array of strategies to constrain contingency, risk and vulnerability. Such distrust-inspired strategies are considered functional in a world of untrustworthy partners, while analogously, to trust can be considered to be the most functional strategy in a world of trustworthy partners (Hardin, 2002).

While distrust produces a predictable and regular aggregate of lost opportunities and related opportunity costs of foregone cooperation (Hardin, 2002), trust reduces the transaction costs of collaborative action but also creates unpredictable and irregular gains and costs where it is misplaced. This consideration led Nooteboom (2006) to argue that the extrinsic value of trust lies in the economic value it generates. Trust can reduce experienced system complexity at far lesser costs because vulnerability

is suspended, while distrust requires costly control- and enforcement-intensive strategies to actively avoid vulnerability (Bromily & Harris, 2006; Cummings & Bromily, 1996; Zaheer, McEvily & Perrone, 1998). A large body of research on the societal, organizational, and interpersonal level has illustrated that the suspension of vulnerability in trust-intensive environments leads to a range of functional consequences such as increased innovation, learning, organizational performance, and effective cooperation (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). We therefore argue that the major functionality of trust lies in its potential for cost-effective goal-oriented collaboration, which is a very important virtue in public administration, where efficiency of goal realization is considered to be the primary criterion of administrative rationality (Simon, 1997).

But it is also true that interorganizational trust is not always functional and distrust is not always dysfunctional. Too much trust might lead to the vehement defense of inefficient, ineffective or even downright counterproductive interorganizational cooperation (Ring & Van de Ven, 1994). Granovetter (1985) argued that too much trust allows lawlessness, non-accountability and corruption. Trust can “bind and blind” (McEvily, Perrone & Zaheer, 2003, p. 98), and provide ample opportunity for abuse.

Table 3 illustrates this discussion with an empirical exploration of the functionalities and dysfunctionalities of interorganizational trust and distrust in Flemish public administration. The exploration is based on interviews with nine Flemish Senior Civil Servants regarding their experiences with positive and negative outcomes of interorganizational trust in the Flemish regional administration, and therefore reflects our conceptual discussion in the practical experiences of senior administrators, who are searching for more and better interorganizational cooperation to deal with complex policy challenges under constant public pressure to “do more with less”. This pressure is felt by all sectors of the economy and encourages the creation of alliances (Shaw, 2003) and stresses the functional value of interorganizational trust in Flemish public administration.

Table 3: Role of interorganizational trust and distrust in Flemish administration (exploration)

	Trust	Distrust
'Functional'	Exploratory interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sine qua non condition for collaborative action - Allows efficient and effective cooperation - Allows open communication - Allows more flexible cooperation 	Exploratory interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allows maintaining critical perspective in cooperation - Allows identification of conflicting objectives in cooperation - Enables constructive criticism and innovation
'Dysfunctional'	Exploratory interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Might lead to 'groupthink' - Can bring comparative disadvantages in high-risk contexts on the short term for organizations 	Exploratory interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active obstruction and atomization instead of collaboration - Involves opportunity costs of avoiding non-effectuated contingencies - Involves relational deterioration

On the basis of these insights, we argue that interorganizational trust can indeed be functional in public administration, but note that researchers and reformers need to avoid presenting it as an “applause concept” that is always and everywhere beneficial for public administration (Van Montfort, 2010). Both trust and distrust can be desirable assets in public administration as long as they provide social value, but neither is desirable or undesirable in and of itself (Beccerra & Gupta, 1999). While our consideration of the functionalities and dysfunctionalities of trust and distrust provides reasons to choose for one over the other, it does not imply a value judgment regarding the extent to which trust and distrust ought to be present in public administration. Moore (1903) argued that it is a naturalistic fallacy to derive moral conclusions from factual premises: an “ought” cannot be derived from an “is”. A moral choice for distrust stresses the functionality of predictable costs of risk avoidance strategies, but accepts that the opportunity- and transaction costs of such strategies are relatively high. A moral choice for trust stresses functionalities such as unpredictable gains, while it accepts the possibility of unpredictable costs when vulnerability is abused and actors become blind to failure. Researchers can therefore identify whether and when interorganizational trust or distrust *have* certain functional and dysfunctional consequences in public administration, but the moral choice regarding how the distribution of trust and distrust *ought* to be should be left to the discretion of autonomous moral faculties, such as democratically elected decision-makers.

2.4. Distribution of trust and distrust

Some authors have argued that trust and distrust do not only have distinct roles, but are distinct (albeit related) phenomena entirely (Luhmann, 1979; Hardin, 2002; Lewicki, McAllister & Bies, 1998). We discuss this notion and its implications in this paragraph.

Lewicki et al. (1998) argue that actors in complex interactions can have multidimensional attitudinal valences. In other words: actors might trust each other with respect to some aspects of the relation but distrust each other regarding other aspects. This perspective calls for clear definitions of trust and distrust as distinct phenomena. While we have defined trust as “the intentional and behavioral suspension of vulnerability by a trustor on the basis of positive expectations of a trustee”, we define distrust as “the intentional and behavioral rejection of vulnerability by a trustor on the basis of negative expectations of a trustee”.

Some authors have argued that the presence of trust does not imply the absence of distrust, as both phenomena result from different antecedents. For instance, Sitkin and Roth (1993) argue that distrust is grounded predominantly in value congruence, while trust is grounded mainly in the context-specific reliable execution of tasks. On the basis of this consideration, they argue that legalistic 'remedies' are appropriate to build trust while they are inappropriate to reduce distrust. Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998, p. 399) argue that *“belief in the absence of “negative intentions” is not the same as belief in the presence of positive intentions – the latter being a necessary condition of the generally accepted definition of trust”*. Furthermore, Zucker suggests that disruptions of trust arise when either ‘background expectations’ (common world understandings) or ‘constitutive expectations’ (context-specific understandings) are violated. However, this does not necessarily involve more distrust, as *“distrust only emerges when the suspicion arises that the disruption of expectations in one exchange is likely to generalize to other ... interactions or exchanges, at least of a particular type”* (Zucker, 1986, p. 59).

Besides the argument that trust and distrust have different antecedents, some scholars argue that they are distinct concepts because they have different characteristics. Lewicki et al. (1998) argue that the continuum of trust is associated

with hope, faith, confidence, assurance and initiative, while the continuum of distrust is associated with fear, skepticism, cynicism, wariness, watchfulness and vigilance. As such, a separate conceptualization of trust and distrust yields four 'ideal type' distributions of trust and distrust that are associated with different characteristics of relations between actors.

A first distribution is that of high trust and low distrust. Under such a distribution, the trustor is confident and does not suspect the trustee. This situation is expected to result in many rich and intense cooperative relationships that create social capital and relational initiative, identification with each other's values, verbalization of positive appreciation and support (McAllister, 1995), relational repair after conflicts and even the invocation of defense mechanisms when confronted with evidence that a trustee might be untrustworthy (Lewicki et al. 1998). Relationships characterized by such a balance are considered to be resilient and sustainable because of the thick trust (Nooteboom, 2006) that grounds them.

The second distribution is dominated by distrust while trust is relatively absent. In such a situation, the trustor has no intention to position himself in a vulnerable way and is extremely wary and watchful for damaging actions of the 'trustee'. Cooperation is avoided when possible. Where cooperation is unavoidable, the distruster makes significant investments to constrain and steer the distrusted and make himself as invulnerable to any action of the distrusted as possible. Interorganizational cooperation under this social reality is characterized by pre-emption, deterrence (Rousseau et al., 1998), continuous monitoring, checking, control (Lewicki et al. 1998) and the exertion of power and coercion (Bachmann, 2001).

The third distribution presents a situation in which low trust and low distrust occur simultaneously. Here, actors in a transaction have no reason to be particularly confident or wary, nor do they have a strong tendency to disengage or engage in any interaction (Lewicki et al. 1998). They are neither particularly willing nor unwilling to be vulnerable. Furthermore, the absence of interactions leads to a low production of relational information, resulting in a lack of 'good reasons' for actors to change their

attitudes. This distribution is therefore relatively stable as long as interaction remains absent.

Finally, the fourth distribution is characterized by both high extents of trust and high extents of distrust. Trustors are confident about some facets of their relationship with a trustee while they are suspicious about other facets at the same time. Actors in a relationship have both common and competing objectives that can potentially conflict. While this distribution might seem counter-intuitive, Lewicki et al. (1998) argue that it is actually the most prevalent position for sustained working relationships in modern, complex organizations. It might be expected that actors in this position are very apt to make calculations of the costs and benefits of cooperation and exchange (Rousseau et al., 1998). Exploratory interviews with Senior Civil Servants in the Flemish public administration yielded some interesting examples of this distribution. One of our respondents illustrated this distribution with a situation in which they and their colleagues play both administrative and political roles. It therefore seems that this position might also be prevalent (or even typical) in public administration contexts.

“Because you have the distrust in the political level and the trust in civil servants. But they are in turn steered by the political level, so distrust plays again, or the other way around. So you constantly have the political and the administrative level and the duality between trust and distrust.”

Although the theory of four distinct distributions of trust and distrust is over ten years old, efforts to measure them as separate constructs have lagged (Lewicki & Brinsfield, 2011). However, a fundamental discussion of complex interorganizational interactions requires researchers to define trust and distrust clearly, identify the distribution in specific relationships while taking into account the extant context-specific tensions and pressures, and study the dynamics between the particular sources and consequences of trust and distrust. In the following paragraph, we consider how trust and distrust are expressed on the (inter)organizational level, and which sources may influence such organization-level trust and distrust.

2.5. The organizational nature of trust and distrust in public administration

Zaheer et al. (1998, p. 142) defined interorganizational trust as “*the extent of trust placed in the partner organization by the members of a focal organization*”. Interorganizational relations are not faceless, because they are actively handled and managed by individuals operating in the institutional and cultural framework of their organizations. Trust can therefore be considered to be ‘organizational’ when certain mandated individuals act on behalf of their organization in a certain interaction. In the literature, these individuals are often specified as ‘boundary spanners’ (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Currall & Judge, 1995; Ring & Van de Ven, 1994; Zaheer et al. 1998; Perrone, Zaheer & McEvily, 2003).

Boundary spanning civil servants are argued to have a “dual personality” due to organizational socialization. Barnard (1938, p. 188 cited in Simon, 1997, p. 283) argues that this dual personality consists of a private personality and an organizational personality, which is mainly determined by organizational demands of efficiency. Therefore, the professional decisions made by boundary spanners are different from the decisions they would make in their personal lives. However, Simon (1997) argues that “*personal motives reassert themselves*” in areas that require discretionary behavior from the individual civil servant (Simon, 1997, p. 283). Interorganizational administrative behavior therefore has a personal and an organizational dimension because it is professed through individual boundary spanning civil servants. In complex interorganizational interactions, these boundary spanners’ individual subjective evaluations build on their personal and organizational considerations, and are therefore the basis of interorganizational trust (Beccerra & Gupta, 1999). Interestingly, the exemplary quote we used to describe the high trust/high distrust distribution suggests that in public administration, a third ‘political’ personality could also play in these subjective evaluations of organizational boundary spanners.

Choudhury (2008) argues that trust is a relational orientation that is embedded and enacted in organizational structures, procedures and institutions. From this, he infers that trust is a social fact in organizations rather than a characteristic of individuals. The organizational nature of interorganizational trust therefore lies in the personal, institutional, and interaction-specific characteristics that affect the subjective

evaluations that boundary spanners make about trust in their counterpart organizations.

Therefore, the analysis of trust and distrust as (inter)organizational notions requires us to take into account how interaction characteristics on three levels influence boundary spanner's subjective evaluations regarding trust and distrust: the macro-level of socializing institutional arrangements, the meso-level of concrete interaction characteristics, and the micro-level of specific individual characteristics (Beccerra & Gupta, 1999; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Zaheer et al. 1998; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). We elaborate on these sources in the following paragraph.

2.6. The sources of interorganizational trust and distrust

The growing literature on trust has resulted in many typologies of sources of trust. The following table presents a comprehensive overview of relevant typologies.

Table 4: Different perspectives on the sources of trust

Author	Trust bases	Description
Zucker (1986) Cited: 3118	Process-based	Developed through repeated interactions where a credible reputation evolves
	Characteristic-based	Tied to the identity of a person or organization, with shared values, beliefs, race, gender, family, etc.
	Institution-based	Based on the existence of formal organizations with responsibility for professional, business and/or government regulation
Sako (1992) Cited: 1611	Contractual	Built on shared moral norms of honesty and promise-keeping
	Competence	Shared understanding between parties of appropriate professional conduct and acceptable technical and managerial standards
	Goodwill	Based on an understanding among parties about what is fair in their transaction
Shapiro, Sheppard & Cherakin (1992) Cited: 704	Deterrence-based	Developed through repeated interactions where the reputation of the firm is held hostage
	Knowledge-based	Developed through knowledge about the other party, resulting from communication and the development of personal relationships that produce dependability
	Identification-based	One party in the transaction fully internalizes the preferences of the other party, foregoing opportunism
McAllister (1995) Cited: 3372	Affect-based	Grounded in reciprocated interpersonal care and concern
	Cognition-based	Grounded in individual beliefs about peer reliability and dependability
Lewicki & Bunker (1996) Cited: 1792	Calculus-based	Trust is on on-going economic calculation whose value is derived by determining the outcomes resulting from creating and sustaining the relationship relative to the costs of maintaining or severing it.
	Knowledge-based	Trust is based on information and knowledge about the other party as a result of communication and personal relationships
	Identification-based	Trust is based on effective understanding and appreciation of the other's wants, and this mutual understanding is developed to the point where each can effectively act for the other.
Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer (1998) Cited: 3872	(Deterrence-based)	Utilitarian considerations that another will act trustworthily because of fear of sanctions that accompany violation of trust (the authors clarify that they do not consider this to be a source of actual trust)
	Institution-based	Organizational and cultural supports (e.g. legal systems) produce confidence that vulnerability in an exchange will not be exploited.
	Calculus-based	Trust is developed when one of the parties in an exchange perceives that the other party intends to perform in a beneficial manner

Kramer (1999) Cited: 1737	Relation-based	Repeated interactions between agents over time produce positive expectations concerning the reliability and dependability of the party
	Dispositional	As expectancies are generalized, people acquire a diffuse expectancy for trust of others that eventually assumes the form of a relatively stable personality characteristic.
	History-based	Is predicated on interactional histories that give decision makers useful information in assessing others' dispositions, intentions, and motives, providing a basis for inferences regarding future behavior.
	Third-party based	Third parties diffuse trust-relevant information via gossip, which constitutes a valuable source of "second-hand" knowledge about others.
	Category- based	Is predicated on information regarding a trustee's membership in a social or organizational category.
	Role-based	Is predicated on knowledge that a person occupies a particular role in the organization rather than specific knowledge about the person's capabilities, dispositions, motives, and intentions.
	Rule-based	Is predicated not on a conscious calculation of consequences, but rather on shared understandings regarding the system of rules regarding appropriate behavior.

(Adapted based on Wilson, 2005; Citation numbers from Google Scholar on 1 March 2013)

We will use the framework developed by Rousseau et al. (1998) as a point of reference for our further discussion because their article is seminal in the body of literature on trust, as exemplified in its extensive citation record. Second, their framework is most suitable to analyze an organizational notion of trust because it allows a discussion of sources on the three levels of interorganizational interactions that influence boundary spanner's subjective evaluations. Third, their framework is flexible enough to incorporate the perspectives of other authors and can also be applied to analyze the sources of interorganizational distrust, allowing researchers to compare the sources of both concepts.

2.6.1. The macro-level: institution-based trust

Macro-level sources of trust and distrust are the institutional characteristics that encompass concrete interorganizational interactions. It is often argued that institutional arrangements can act both as supports or impediments to trust (Zucker, 1986; Bachmann & Zaheer, 2008; Bachmann & Inkpen, 2011; Rousseau, 1998). Institution-based trust entails that a trustor's subjective evaluation of trust or distrust in a trustee are embedded in "*internal organizing principles and practices*" (Perrone et al., 2003, p. 428) that encompass the interaction. Institution-based trust is argued to play an important role in large and fragmented organizations because it forms a bridge between unfamiliar actors (Sydow, 2006) by establishing a 'world in common' (Zucker, 1986) through formal and informal norms of behavior. In public

administration, where spatial and social distances can be of considerable magnitude, institution-based trust could therefore be an important driver of trust and distrust.

Institutions can establish trust rather directly or more subtly through socialization of boundary spanners. Whereas formal institutions such as rules and role definitions can socialize boundary spanners through coercive isomorphism, informal institutions such as organizational routines and dominant normative frameworks work through mimetic and normative isomorphic mechanisms (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). As such, both formal and informal institutions can bridge unfamiliarity in the decision to trust or refrain from doing so and shape actor behavior along the lines of institutionally provided templates (Bachmann & Inkpen, 2011). Rules rest on shared understandings regarding appropriate behavior and are a potent organizational resource to facilitate coordination and cooperation (Kramer, 1999). Roles can allow boundary spanners to adopt trust even in the absence of personalized knowledge, on the basis of common knowledge regarding barriers to entry into roles, presumptions of training and socialization processes that role occupants undergo, and perceptions of the accountability mechanisms that ensure role compliance (Kramer, 1999). Informal institutions such as organizational routines can establish trust because they can lead to a taken-for-granted attitude of mutual trust between organizations. Finally, the perceived normative frameworks of peers or leaders might establish an organizational “*culture of trustfulness*” (Sztompka, 1998) as a typical group orientation, exerting pressure on the individual actor’s subjective evaluation.

2.6.2. The meso-level: relations and calculus

While institutions impact trustor boundary spanner’s subjective evaluations through the formation of institutional “bridges” between unfamiliar actors (Sydow, 2006), the meso-level trust sources refer to relation-specific familiarity, information, characteristics and dynamics. On this level, we consider calculative and relational sources of trust (Rousseau et al., 1998).

The idea of calculus-based trust presents trust as a utilitarian strategy in which trustors rationally weigh the costs and benefits of certain courses of action in interactive settings on the basis of incomplete and asymmetric information about the trustee with the aim of maximizing their individual utility. Calculus-based trust

therefore rests on the trustor's utility function and on the availability of credible (asymmetrical) information about the trustee's trustworthiness in the relation (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996). Such credible sources of information might be found in the relation with the trustee (for instance the revealed preferences of the trustee), in third parties statements about the trustee, in the trustee's reputation, or in institutional sources (for instance performance reports, organizational audits, etc.). This calculative perspective is very prominent in Hardin's (2001) work on trust as an 'encapsulated interest', in which it is argued that trust is placed in an actor when it is perceived that that actor has an interest in continuing a certain relationship. The calculative source stresses the cognitive nature of trust (Lewis & Weigert, 1985), which is discussed by other scholars as knowledge-based trust (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996), cognition-based trust (McAllister, 1995), or third party based trust (Kramer, 1999).

However, some scholars argue that trust cannot be explained by calculative decisions alone (Lyon, Möllering & Saunders, 2011). Trust is argued to also stem from relational sources, which are based on repeated interactions between actors and on reciprocated interpersonal care and concern, which leads to the formation of emotional attachments (Rousseau et al., 1998). Shaw (2003) argues that good interpersonal relationships contribute to the level of trust in non-profit partnerships. Value identification between parties and mutual experience with the historical development of a relation are important components of these relational sources, which rest on personal and historical familiarity (Rousseau et al., 1998). These sources are slowly established, strengthened and expanded as a result of repeated experiences with interaction in risky and uncertain environments. Relation-based trust and distrust is also argued to be more emotional (Lewis & Weigert, 1985), and related conceptualizations suggested by other authors are affection-based trust (McAllister, 1995) and identity-based trust (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Shapiro, Sheppard & Cherakin, 1992).

It is important to note that these sources are not completely independent from each other. The potential for both calculative and relational considerations might depend on the institutional framework encompassing interorganizational interactions. For instance, actor objectives or values might be institutionally determined in their roles, thereby possibly influencing relational trust between boundary spanners. The

calculus considerations can depend on information gathered by institutional mechanisms such as audit or control bodies, or the presence of incentive structures that influence actors' individual utility functions. Therefore, sufficient attention is needed for the institutional background of meso-level sources of interorganizational trust and distrust.

2.6.3. *The micro level: individual predispositions*

Finally, it is argued that boundary spanners' subjective evaluations are also influenced by their own individual trusting or distrusting predispositions (Rotter, 1967). These dispositions are considered to represent a general tendency of focal actors to trust or distrust others regardless of the situation, interaction or relation, meaning that they constitute a generally stable individual trait of 'willingness to trust others' (Frazier, Johnson & Fainshmidt, 2013). They are presented as psychological traits of individuals (Sztompka, 1998) which result from of a "*wide-ranging summation of past experience in more localized domains*" (Glanville & Paxton, 2007, p. 232), and are also referred to as individual trustfulness (Sztompka, 1998), dispositional trust (McKnight, Cummings & Chervany, 1998), or individual propensity to trust (Mayer et al., 1995).

3. Consolidation: studying 'administrational' trust

In our discussion of interorganizational trust, we have addressed a gap in the existing public administration literature.

Trust is defined as "*the intentional and behavioral suspension of vulnerability by a trustor on the basis of positive expectations of a trustee*", and distrust as "*the intentional and behavioral rejection of vulnerability by a trustor on the basis of negative expectations of a trustee*". We have presented all the necessary building blocks to define 'administrational trust and distrust' as a crucial but currently understudied research topic in public administration. The prefix 'administrational' is a contraction of the words 'organizational' and 'administrative'. On the one hand, this prefix designates an organizational notion of trust (and distrust), which stresses the subjective evaluations of organizational boundary spanners concerning three dimensions of trust, on the basis of sources that lie in three levels of interorganizational interactions: the micro level refers to the attitudinal

predispositions of these boundary spanners, the meso level refers to calculative and relational characteristics in interactions between boundary spanners, and the macro level refers to formal and informal institutions surrounding the interorganizational interaction. On the other hand, it highlights the administrative context of our study, as studies directed at a better understanding of interorganizational trust and distrust need to take the specificities of their particular context into account. While trust relates to a general attitude of groups towards an abstract object in its most diffuse form (Uslaner, 2011), more contextualized 'specific' operationalizations require the object, subject, context and situation of interorganizational trust to be defined as clear as possible (Nooteboom, 2002, p. 259). Therefore, we define 'administrational trust' as "a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners regarding their intentional and behavioral suspension of vulnerability on the basis of their expectations of a trustee organization in particular interorganizational interactions in public administration."

Our discussion is consolidated in a comprehensive analytical framework, which can be used as a guide for researchers that have the ambition to fill this gap in public administration research. The framework allows examination of the mechanisms of administrational trust and distrust. As illustrated in table 5, these mechanisms consist of seven sources on three levels of interorganizational interactions, which influence boundary spanners' evaluations concerning three dimensions of trust and distrust. To that extent, the framework depicts our attempt to clear a path through the "conceptual morass" that resulted from the accumulation of previous conceptualizations of (interorganizational) trust, and lays the foundations of more comprehensive analyses of administrative systems' capacity to develop 'administrational' trust and distrust.

First, the framework brings added analytical value because it conceptualizes trust and distrust as two potentially different constructs. As such, researchers can use this framework to examine whether and to which extent interorganizational trust and distrust exist separately, simultaneously, or not at all in a range of interactions that are central to public administration.

Second, it conceptualizes three distinct dimensions of administrative trust and distrust. As such, the framework allows researchers to examine whether different dynamics exist within or between the three dimensions of both subjective evaluations, allowing attention for the potential emergence of self-reinforcing virtuous or vicious cycles of administrative trust and distrust.

Third, the framework is useful for analysis of the mechanisms of administrative trust and distrust because it identifies seven categories of 'sources' on three levels of interactions which might impact boundary spanners' subjective evaluations regarding the three dimensions of trust and distrust. It shows how subjective evaluations of the three dimensions of trust and distrust are influenced by characteristics of rules, roles, routines and dominant normative frameworks on the macro-level, by interaction-specific calculative and relational characteristics on the meso-level, and by individual predispositions on the micro-level of interorganizational interactions. As such, the framework allows researchers to identify and examine the mechanisms that lie at the basis of administrative systems' capacity for administrative trust and distrust. A comparison of columns in the framework permits an answer to the question of how singular sources impact subjective evaluations of the three dimensions (for instance, how do role definitions in a particular interorganizational interaction influence boundary spanners' evaluations in all three dimensions of administrative trust and distrust?), while a comparison of the horizontal rows answers the question as to how subjective evaluations of each singular dimension are impacted by multiple sources of administrative trust and distrust (for instance: how are trustor boundary spanners' perceptions of trustworthiness influenced by the framework of rules, roles, interpersonal relationships, etc.).

In its entirety, the framework therefore captures much of the complexity of administrative trust and distrust. It allows researchers to compare weaknesses and

Table 5: Analytical framework of sources of administrative trust and distrust

	Formal institutions		Informal institutions		Interactions		Personal		
	Rules	Roles	Routines	Normative framework	Calculus	Relations	Disposition		
Trust	(Perceived) trustworthiness	(How) do rules support positive expectations?	(How) do roles support positive expectations?	(How) do routines support positive expectations?	(How) do normative frameworks support positive expectations?	(How) does utility maximization support positive expectations?	(How) do relations support positive expectations?	(How) do dispositions support positive expectations?	Sources of perceived trustworthiness
	Intended suspension of vulnerability	(How) do rules support actors' willingness to be vulnerable?	(How) do roles support actors' willingness to be vulnerable?	(How) do routines support actors' willingness to be vulnerable?	(How) do normative frameworks support actors' willingness to be vulnerable?	(How) does utility maximization support actors' willingness to be vulnerable?	(How) do relations support actors' willingness to be vulnerable?	(How) do dispositions support actors' willingness to be vulnerable?	Sources of intended suspension of vulnerability
	Behavioral trust	(How) do rules support actors' risk-taking behavior?	(How) do roles support actors' risk-taking behavior?	(How) do routines support actors' risk-taking behavior?	(How) do normative frameworks support actors' risk-taking behavior?	(How) does utility maximization support actors' risk-taking behavior?	(How) do relations support actors' risk-taking behavior?	(How) do dispositions support actors' risk-taking behavior?	Sources of behavioral trust
Distrust	(Perceived) untrustworthiness	(How) do rules support negative expectations?	(How) do roles support negative expectations?	(How) do routines support negative expectations?	(How) do normative frameworks support negative expectations?	(How) does utility maximization support negative expectations?	(How) do relations support negative expectations?	(How) do dispositions support negative expectations?	Sources of perceived untrustworthiness
	Intended rejection of vulnerability	(How) do rules support actors' intention to reject vulnerability?	(How) do roles support actors' intention to reject vulnerability?	(How) do routines support actors' intention to reject vulnerability?	(How) do normative frameworks support actors' intention to reject vulnerability?	(How) does utility maximization support actors' intention to reject vulnerability?	(How) do relations support actors' intention to reject vulnerability?	(How) do dispositions support actors' intention to reject vulnerability?	Sources of intended rejection of vulnerability
	Behavioral distrust	(How) do rules support actors' risk-avoiding behavior?	(How) do roles support actors' risk-avoiding behavior?	(How) do routines support actors' risk-avoiding behavior?	(How) do normative frameworks support actors' risk-avoiding behavior?	(How) does utility maximization support actors' risk-avoiding behavior?	(How) do relations support actors' risk-avoiding behavior?	(How) do dispositions support actors' risk-avoiding behavior?	Sources of behavioral distrust
	Institutional regulatory sources of adm. trust and distrust	Institutional role sources of adm. trust and distrust	Institutional routine sources of adm. trust and distrust	Institutional normative sources of adm. trust and distrust	Interactive calculative sources of adm. trust and distrust	Interactive relational sources of adm. trust and distrust	Personal sources of adm. trust and distrust	Sources of administrative trust and distrust	

strengths of different interorganizational regimes regarding their capacity to generate administrative trust and/or distrust. Furthermore, it allows reformers and public managers to formulate specific managerial strategies to optimize the administrative trust-distrust distribution. In addition to its analytical value, the framework therefore also has practical value for public sector reformers, who can apply it as the framework for development of an integrated strategy to manage administrative trust and distrust which takes into account that strategies directed at supporting trust in one cell of the framework might have positive or negative side-effects in another cell of the framework. Furthermore, the framework allows them to take into account that strategies that aim to support administrative trust might differ from strategies that are directed at the reduction of administrative distrust. The framework comes with one major disclaimer for both reformers and researchers: preferences and decisions regarding the distribution of administrative trust and distrust are normative positions, as both trust and distrust bring functionalities and dysfunctions into interorganizational collaborative environments that may or may not have some ideological connotations in political environments such as public administration.

4. Conclusion

We argued that interorganizational trust in public administration is a crucial but currently understudied topic in public administration research. We therefore presented an overview of the rich literature regarding trust and discussed the concepts that are central to the study of interorganizational trust and distrust in public administration, which we have conceptualized as 'administrative trust'. The conceptual discussion we presented can serve as a signpost in the conceptual morass that is trust research. We have argued that both administrative trust and distrust can be considered to have certain functionalities and dysfunctions, and that any judgment regarding which is 'better' is therefore a moral choice that should be left to autonomous moral decision-makers. We also suggested to define the concept of 'administrative trust' as *"a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners regarding their intentional and behavioral suspension of vulnerability on the basis of their expectations of a trustee organization in particular interorganizational interactions in public administration"*, and presented an analytical framework that allows researchers and managerial professionals to study the mechanisms that

underlie administrative trust and distrust empirically, on the basis of which strategies for optimization might be developed to facilitate, solidify and increase the performance of interorganizational cooperation in public administration. While the usefulness of the analytical framework is ultimately assessed in its future empirical application, we argue that this article makes a contribution to the existing literature by providing a canvass for theory, research and managerial strategies of administrative trust and distrust, and that it can therefore support public administration to build the self-confidence it needs to provide better services and ultimately strengthen the trust it receives from the society it intends to serve.

5. Notes

1. The authors want to thank prof. Dr. Chris Skelcher, prof. Dr. Montgomery van Wart, prof. Dr. Koen Verhoest, Prof. Dr. Jeroen Maesschalk, Dr. Joery Matthys, Marloes Callens and the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this article.
2. Our reference to the pressure on Flemish Civil Servants to “do more with less” is not without reason. In fact; “do more with less” is one of the four strategic goals in the “Multiannual Program Decisive Government”, the current major public management reform program in Flanders.

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